

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

IRAN DROUGHT: SUPPORT TO AFGHAN REFUGEES

17 March 2003

Appeal No. 19/02

Launched on 15 July 2002 for CHF 899,000 for 12 months for 65,000 beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries: 65,000

Operations Update No. 02 ;

Period covered: 10 November 2002 - 15 February 2003 ;

Last Update: 10 November 2002

Next Update 03, expected July 2003

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 68.9%

Related Appeals: MENA regional programmes 01.93/2003

Outstanding needs: CHF 279,396

Summary: Implementation of the operation is well underway, targeting 65,000 vulnerable people (mostly Afghan refugees) in the Sistan-va-Baluchistan province of Iran. Beneficiaries are provided with safe drinking water on a daily basis, and are included in waste-disposal and preventive health activities. Provided that outstanding appeal needs are covered, and pending the results of the upcoming operational review and needs assessment in the region, possible extension and/or expansion of the programme will be considered.

Operational Developments w

In July 2002, the Federation launched a second consecutive (since 2000) emergency appeal to assist 65,000 people affected by water shortages in the eastern province of Sistan-va-Baluchistan of Iran, close to the border with Afghanistan. Approximately 80 percent of the target population are Afghan refugees living in non-camp settlements of Zabul and Zahedan, with the rest being Iranian population deprived of access to safe drinking water in the same areas. The operation is a continuation of the appeal 21/2000.

Serious water shortages in the region are due to a number of factors. A continuing drought has been affecting the whole of Central Asia for the past 4 years, and eastern parts of Iran have been particularly seriously hit. According to official statistics, the level of rainfall has been continuously decreasing in Zahedan and Zabul since 1999, as indicated in the table below:

Annual rainfall (mm)	Average normal	Mar 99 - Mar 00	Mar 00 - Mar 01	Mar 01 - Mar 02
Zahedan	76	50.3	41.6	13.5
Zabul	76	56.3	33.3	9.1

In addition to drought, Iran has presently no permanent access to the water coming from Afghanistan's Helmand river. Exceptional cases are such as on the 22 February 2003 when water flooded from the border at a rate of 500 million cubic meters per second, of which 300 million cubic meters of water was led to artificial lakes in the Zabul area. The volume from the Afghan river later reduced to 100 cubic meter per second.

Iranian authorities have made efforts to improve water supply in the province, by initiating a campaign to connect initially 800 villages of Zabul region to a permanent water pipeline. Then, they decided to cover almost all the Zabul villages by targeting 900 villages. So far, 800 villages (covering 96% of the rural population) have been connected. However, most of them are mainly populated by Iranians, while the Afghan population is still in dire need of water.

In April 2002, UNHCR initiated a voluntary repatriation scheme of Afghan refugees in Iran. Despite a generally positive repatriation process, the number of Afghan refugees who are staying in the province of Sistan-va-Baluchistan has remained virtually the same, with only 34,000 out of the total of 380,000 leaving the province as part of this scheme. Those remaining in Iran are having increasing difficulties finding work and being self-supportive, due to new laws being passed preventing organisations from hiring Afghans, because of their lack of residence status. Since the repatriation programme implemented by UNHCR has not affected the areas where the water supply project is running, the same number of the beneficiaries are being supplied with fresh water.

All above-mentioned indicators reflect continued hardship for Afghan refugees, as well as parts of the Iranian population, who do not have access to permanent water-supply systems. In view of the situation, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the Federation have continued the drought operation initiated in August 2000, through this emergency appeal. The objectives are to provide clean drinking water to 65,000 people, carry out public health education, as well as waste disposal activities. Approximately 95 percent of the targeted beneficiaries live in Zahedan and the remaining five percent in Zabul.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

IRCS and the Federation have been implementing the operation since August 2000. The focus has remained largely the same, both in terms of the beneficiary selection criteria, target numbers, as well as programme objectives. The continuity of the operation has provided the opportunity to refine the implementation modalities and build capacities on the basis of lessons learnt.

Coordination w

IRCS and the Federation have been carrying out this operation in close cooperation with provincial authorities. The Zahedan water and sanitation department is organizing chlorination of water, and providing regular information on the general drought situation in the region, ongoing water supply projects, as well as future outlook. In Zabul, regular meetings with the local water department are being held to facilitate water collection and distribution.

Also, coordination meetings are being held at field level between IRCS, the Federation, UN agencies and NGOs present in the region. Finally, efforts are being made to coordinate humanitarian assistance provided through this operation with UNHCR, who are responsible for the implementation of the voluntary repatriation scheme that started in April 2002.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w

The provincial IRCS branch has been responsible for the planing and implementation of the project since the beginning, in close cooperation with the Federation and the IRCS headquarters. Logistical setup, established in the previous operation (appeal 21/2000) has been maintained, with all hardware capacity being in use and managed by the National Society. This includes 23 water tanks, 14 trucks of various capacity, as well as 12 tractors with trailers. Over 60 employees, such as drivers, guards, administration staff, garbage collectors and maintenance staff, as well as a number of field officers and volunteers, have been hired by the National Society branches in Zahedan and Zabul and trained to actively participate in the implementation of all objectives, including data collection, monitoring, administration of water distribution, negotiations with local authorities, health prevention campaign, etc. Feedback from beneficiaries has been positive. The national society continues to review and monitor the project to better meet the needs.

Objectives, activities and results w

Water and sanitation w

Objective 1: *Distribute fresh water to the affected population in Zahedan and Zabul, populated mainly by Afghan refugees living in non-camp settlements.*

Approximately 65,000 beneficiaries are assisted on a daily basis with regular supply of fresh drinking water. Of that number, some 61,500 are in Zahedan and 3,500 in Zabul. Presently, the total amount of water distributed is 404,000 litres per day.

In Zahedan, water is collected from three private wells, on the basis of contracts signed between IRCS and well owners. Prior to distribution, water is systematically chlorinated at stations administered by the local public health department. In addition, the health department is running mobile check points tasked to monitor the level of chlorination of water in tanks. The distribution is carried out twice a day, except on Fridays, through 17 fixed water tanks and 10 mobile distribution points. The amount of water distributed in Zahedan is 344,000 litres per day - an average of 6 litres per person per day. This is due to the fact that most population in Zahedan have access to regular water supply system. However, the water from the pipeline is saline, and is therefore used in households for other purposes, while the water distributed by IRCS is used exclusively for drinking. In areas with access to regular water supply, fixed tanks are filled only once a day.

In Zabul, the chlorinated water is collected free of charge from two water outlets of the city's water pipeline and distributed in rural areas through seven distribution points. A decrease from 15 distribution points in the previous operation to seven in this one is due to the implementation of the government plan to initially connect 800 villages in Zabul to regular water supply system. Eight villages targeted by the IRCS operation have been included in that plan, for which reason they were removed from the beneficiary list of this project. Subsequently, the number of beneficiaries decreased from 17,000 to some 3,500. This reduction appears not to affect the total number of target population (65,000). However, this is due to an earlier underestimated calculation of the average family size. In the emergency appeal document, the target number of 16,000 families was made to correspond to 65,000 people, on the basis of the average family size of four. Nevertheless, as the average size of the family is five, the initial target number can be corrected to 80,000 people. Therefore, the exclusion of eight villages in Zabul does represent a decrease in the original beneficiary number from 80,000 to 65,000. Beneficiaries receive an average of 17 litres of water per person, thus making the total amount of water distributed in Zabul 60,000 litres per day.

Out of the total fleet available for this project, in Zahedan IRCS is using 11 trucks - six of 12,000 litres capacity, four of 5,000 litres, one of 30,000 litres, as well as 10 water tractors. In Zabul, three trucks of 12,000 litres capacity are being used for water distribution.

Community members, including women, have been selected to guard water tanks and oversee the delivery and distribution of water. They are recruited from the Afghan population, as part of efforts to help them cope with highly limited employment opportunities.

Objective 2: *Clean up solid waste in non-camp settlements, especially in areas close to the existing water distribution points.*

The solid waste disposal project is implemented in Zahedan, with the aim to increase hygiene of the targeted areas, especially those around water distribution points. IRCS has recruited, trained and equipped two teams - 11 solid waste workers and 2 drivers. The teams are responsible for collection of solid waste in allocated sites (one team is in charge of cleaning the defined sites in Karimabad, another team in Shirabad), and their transport by two tractor-trailers to a special disposal area allocated by the municipality, located 12 km away from Zahedan city. An average of 9,330 kg of waste (21.8 cubic metres) is being disposed of on a daily basis. The garbage collectors are equipped with helmets, protective masks, overalls, boots, shovels and gloves.

Health and care w

Objective 1: *Establish a community based preventive health and hygiene promotion programme, in order to improve the living conditions of the Afghan refugee population in non-camp settlements.*

Reviews of health activities that were part of the previous emergency appeal indicate an increased awareness of beneficiaries of water-borne diseases and their prevention, hygiene and safe use of water. Therefore, the scope and type of activities within this operation will remain the same. This time the national society branch in Zahedan will implement the programme, as the relief workers and volunteers are now experienced enough to run the programme by themselves without involvement of the local health department. The implementation has not begun yet, however all the preparations have been done, including designing the posters and pamphlets to be used during the education programme, making sample hygienic kits to be distributed among selected beneficiaries who would change their hygienic behaviours after the education is done, holding different coordination sessions with the participation of volunteers and nurses and heads of groups to organise the starting of the programme on time. It will start this month. The trained IRCS volunteers will work in dissemination of preventive health messages. Volunteers will carry out a visit to beneficiary households. They will collect the information on the beneficiaries' general health situation, provide advice and guidance on safe use of water, hygiene and health. Each visited family will get a note on which the location and the time of a further education in public centres will be mentioned, provided that they have been visited and got the preliminary face to face education. Each day a defined number of families who have been visited will come to the defined places to be educated more in health and hygiene by professional nurses and doctors. Those families who will participate in the classes will receive hygienic kits.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives w

This operation mainly targets Afghan refugees living in non-camp settlements who do not have access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and most of whom do not have regulated residence in Iran and therefore cannot qualify for work. IRCS and the Federation play an important role in advocating the need for provision of minimum standard of assistance to refugees, jointly with UNHCR and ICRC. In close cooperation with the authorities, efforts are being made to promote more sustainable ways of providing assistance to refugees, such as construction of wells, while acknowledging their temporary residence in Iran. Also, inclusion of the vulnerable Iranian population from the same settlements in this operation ensures the balance in provision of assistance and adherence to the criterion of vulnerability as the most important one in identifying target groups.

Female beneficiaries are of major importance in projects such as this one, in view of their central role in the maintenance of households, including the use of water and family hygiene. For that reason, they are especially targeted in health education campaigns, and provided with information on safe use of water, proper hygiene and preventive health measures. Women are also being recruited to supervise and administer water distribution from fixed water tankers.

National Society Capacity Building w

When the operation started in August 2000, slow donor response imposed prioritisation of objectives and reduction of the original target of 100,000 beneficiaries. Over the past two years, IRCS provincial branch has considerably strengthened its technical and human resources capacity. The vehicle fleet procured through the emergency appeal was handed over to the National Society to replace old malfunctioning trucks and a number

of leased vehicles. Human resources have been enhanced, with over 100 new staff and volunteers recruited and trained. IRCS project coordinators and field officers have assumed a greater number of responsibilities within the programme.

Federation Delegation w

The Federation delegation is assisting IRCS in the overall operational management, by coordinating donor response, monitoring the implementation and providing technical assistance to IRCS in capacity building with a focus on planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, facilitation in the strengthening of human and financial resources and standardization of procedures.

Direct support to the National Society is provided by the relief delegate, mainly responsible for monitoring of project implementation. A field officer based in Zahedan is in charge for daily coordination of activities with the IRCS provincial branch, as well as monitoring and data collection, including information on weather conditions, health statistics, repatriation process and other information necessary for the evaluation of the impact of the operation on the most vulnerable.

Logistics w

The following tables indicate the current logistical capacities for the water distribution programme.

Fixed tanks:

Location	Number of tanks	Capacity (litres) per tank	Total litres
Zahedan	9	20'000	180'000
	2	12'000	24'000
	6	5'000	30'000
<i>Total Zahedan</i>	<i>17</i>		<i>234'000</i>
Zabul	3	20'000	60'000
	3	5'000	15'000
<i>Total Zabul</i>	<i>6</i>		<i>75'000</i>
Grand Total	23		309'000

Trucks:

Location	Number of trucks	Capacity (litres) per truck	Total litres
Zahedan	1	30'000	30'000
	6	12'000	72'000
	4	5'000	20'000
<i>Total Zahedan</i>	<i>11</i>		<i>122'000</i>
Zabul	3	12'000	36'000
Grand total	14		158'000

Tractors with mobile water tanks:

Location	Number of tractors	Capacity (litres) per mobile tank	Total litres
Zahedan	10	5'000	50'000
Zahedan	2	N/A *	N/A *

* The 2 tractors in Zahedan are used for transport of solid waste.

Visibility

Visibility has been achieved by displaying the logos of the Federation and the Iranian Red Crescent. Furthermore, on all the materials regarding the health and hygiene programme, the Federation logo will be printed

All fixed tanks and tankers both in Zahedan and Zabul region have been recently repainted, including the Federation sign. Project vehicles are also kept in good shape.

Advocacy/Public Information w

Advocacy on the needs and rights of the target population is made at the field level, through cooperation with local authorities, UN and NGOs present in the region. Local and international media are active in the follow up of the drought situation in the region, as well as issues of water distribution between Afghanistan and Iran. Finally, IRCS and the Federation are using their respective web site to draw further attention of external partners and the public to the need to continue supporting this needed operation. The Federation's regional delegation in Amman is assisting in further media mobilization on this the programme .

Outstanding needs w

The current level of donor support will ensure a smooth running of the operation until July 2003 ,Provided that present appeal needs are covered as expected, and following the upcoming review of the operation and a related needs assessment in the region, possible extension and/or expansion of the programme will be considered.

Afghan refugees in both Zahedan and Zabul regions need to get some educational facilities and materials for the Afghan children to be educated locally by the Afghan community .Requests have been made by community members concerned about the future of Afghan children. A psychological support programme is needed as well distribution of books and educational materials.

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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